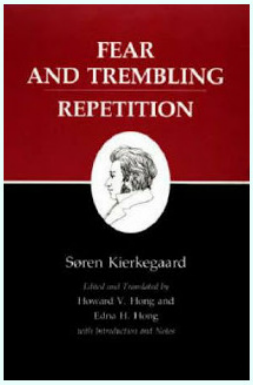
# As/Is

## 8.28.2015

### Kierkegaard and Dry Ice




The complex relationship between Inter-Dialogism and philosophy cannot be simply or succinctly enumerated. When consciousness leaps into other consciousness, the basic questions of phenomenology remain the same— what is inside our consciousness, what is outside, what is held or bounded in or by consciousness, and what is not— only issues of individuation, difference, and distinction manifest to lead any inquiry into any number of both theoretical and semantic quagmires. When philosophical issues are addressed in serious poetry, the potential and actual arabesques out into cognitive space become innumerable, especially when Inter-Dialogism is used in a new capacity. What happens when, as often happens in philosophy, allegorical figures are employed? From Socrates to Zarathustra to Abraham, philosophical texts must lean on symbolic representations of individuals, to delineate the essences of philosophical dilemmas and interests. Abraham, we know, was Kierkegaard's major choice is his most pivotal text— Fear and Trembling— and he, as an author, asks us, as an implicit "you" in an I-thou relationship, to attempt to leap into Abraham's consciousness when the Lord asks him to climb the mountain and sacrifice his son, seemingly for no reason, and testing Abraham's faith, sharpening his faculties of perception. Apparition Poem 1613 subsists as both an interpretive vista onto Kierkegaard and a tangential representation of an implicit "I" who has been able, it would seem, to achieve the requisite Inter-Dialogic leap into Abraham's consciousness, though we know Abraham to only be a figure in an allegory, rather than a partner in any intimacy:

Follow Abraham up the hill:
to the extent that the hill is
constituted already by kinds
of knives, to what extent can
a man go up a hill, shepherd
a son to be sacrificed, to be
worthy before an almighty
power that may or may not
have had conscious intentions

where hills, knives, sons were
concerned, but how, as I watch
this, can I not feel that Abraham,
by braving knives, does not need
the one he holds in his rapt hands?

What the implicit I sees in 1613 is a kind of loop around unconscious processes of governance— that God himself may rule the Universe from a center of consciousness or not, and that the subtle mental strength Abraham gains from contact with this Universe Force unconsciously begins to direct his thoughts and actions, which take on consonance with being sharp, incisive, knife-like. The final loop, we see, is that, in a binding chain, the "I" in the poem becomes sharp, incisive, and knife-like from Inter-Dialogic interaction with Abraham (and it is implicit by this time that Inter-Dialogic interactions may happen with characters in allegories and their unseen creators, as well as flesh and blood people), who has inherited his incisiveness from the Universe Force whose consciousness or unconsciousness cannot be gauged or mastered. If the dry ice rule applies here, as it does for most of Apparition Poems, it is because all philosophy, as heavy as it is on intellect and allegory, is touched by dry ice, and I-you queries ride shot-gun to the objectivism which must drive the enterprise forward and turn the proverbial steering wheel. Is some real I-thou intimacy mixed in? To answer this brings us to a philosophical critical crux which is very strange— strange, in 1613, because the protagonist seems to be (mystically, uncannily) attempting an Inter-Dialogic leap into our brain, as he (unconsciously) sees what he sees, and steps back out again, leaving a sense behind that philosophical awareness can be governed by unconscious processes and impersonal forces all the way through, just as many of the most salient Big Questions, both for science and philosophy, are impersonal ones, and can only be conjectured at in an impersonal, if not unconscious, manner. The implied "you" in 1613 is rather rare (and an interesting parallel to the "you" Saint Augustine is eventually granted in **The Posit Trilogy**), and demanded by a literary context; a merely philosophical context would stay in the third person; but, in attempting a bridge and a chiasmus between philosophy and literature, and, as is also the case in **1617**, aids the reader in feeling a sense of humanity amidst all the objectivism and dry ice. Yet, the contradiction inheres that in addressing the Big Questions on any profound level, it is almost always individual consciousness which is able to produce breakthroughs in science and philosophy, cloaked in the impersonality and objectivity (governed, also, often unconscious processes) of the third person. If poetry is able to enter this game seriously, the first person singular must re-make itself as explicit, and personal, to give whatever construct is at hand the insignia of the aesthetic (including poetry's imperative-to-song), and allow the reader graceful entrance.

posted by **Adam Fieled** on **Friday, August 28, 2015**

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